

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (original): A unit for preparing leaves of paper material from a continuous strip caused to advance along a predetermined feed path, including:  
    cutting means, by which the leaves are separated in succession from the strip at a predetermined cutting frequency, comprising a first aspirating conveyor and a second conveyor substantially tangential to the first conveyor;  
    means, associated with the first conveyor, by which the tension of the advancing strip is varied cyclically and synchronously with the action of the cutting means, capable of cyclical movement generated synchronously with the cutting frequency between two limit positions relative to the outer surface of the first conveyor.
2. (original): A unit as in claim 1, wherein the first conveyor comprises a first suction roller, and the two limit positions of the tension varying means are identifiable as an external position and an internal position, relative to the outer surface of the first suction roller.
3. (currently amended): A unit as in ~~claims~~ claim 1 and 2, wherein the tension varying means comprise at least one diverter element revolving about a fixed axis parallel to an axis of the first conveyor.
4. (original): A unit as in claim 3, wherein the fixed axis of the diverter element occupies a position between the axis of the first suction roller and the outer surface of the selfsame roller.
5. (original): A unit as in claim 4, wherein the outer surface of the first suction roller is afforded by a plurality of cantilevered aspirating sectors arranged around the periphery of a

supporting disc and separated one from the next by a uniform angular distance in such a way as to create a gap between each two adjacent sectors.

6. (original): A unit as in claim 1, wherein the second conveyor comprises a roller supporting a plurality of substantially radial blades equispaced angularly around and projecting from the peripheral surface of the selfsame roller.

7. (currently amended): A unit as in claim 5 and ~~claim 6~~, wherein each aspirating sector presents a relative longitudinal corner edge extending parallel to the rotational axis of the first suction roller and combining with a corresponding blade of the second roller to create a device such as will scissor-cut the continuous strip.

8. (original): A unit as in claim 5, comprising a shaft, centered on the fixed axis of revolution, of which the free end carries a flange located on the side of the suction roller opposite from the disc carrying the aspirating sectors, wherein the flange carries a plurality of diverter elements consisting in cylindrical rods disposed parallel to the fixed axis, projecting toward the disc and designed to pass cyclically through the gaps between adjacent sectors during the rotation of the first roller, as the shaft rotates about the fixed axis.

9. (original): A unit as in claim 8, wherein the flange presents a substantially triangular configuration and carries one cylindrical rod at each vertex.

10. (currently amended): A unit as in ~~claims~~ claim 1 to 9, wherein the shaft carrying the flange is driven in rotation from a shaft carrying the disc of the first roller.

11. (new): A unit as in claim, wherein the tension varying means comprise at least one diverter element revolving about a fixed axis parallel to an axis of the first conveyor.

12. (new): A unit as in claim 11, wherein the fixed axis of the diverter element occupies a position between the axis of the first suction roller and the outer surface of the selfsame roller.

13. (new): A unit as in claim 12, wherein the outer surface of the first suction roller is afforded by a plurality of cantilevered aspirating sectors arranged around the periphery of a supporting disc and separated one from the next by a uniform angular distance in such a way as to create a gap between each two adjacent sectors.
14. (new): A unit as in claim 13, wherein each aspirating sector presents a relative longitudinal corner edge extending parallel to the rotational axis of the first suction roller and combining with a corresponding blade of the second roller to create a device such as will scissor-cut the continuous strip.
15. (new): A unit as in claim 14, comprising a shaft, centered on the fixed axis of revolution, of which the free end carries a flange located on the side of the suction roller opposite from the disc carrying the aspirating sectors, wherein the flange carries a plurality of diverter elements consisting in cylindrical rods disposed parallel to the fixed axis, projecting toward the disc and designed to pass cyclically through the gaps between adjacent sectors during the rotation of the first roller, as the shaft rotates about the fixed axis.
16. (new): A unit as in claim 15, wherein the flange presents a substantially triangular configuration and carries one cylindrical rod at each vertex.
17. (new): A unit as in claim 6, wherein each aspirating sector presents a relative longitudinal corner edge extending parallel to the rotational axis of the first suction roller and combining with a corresponding blade of the second roller to create a device such as will scissor-cut the continuous strip.
18. (new): A unit as in claim 2, wherein the shaft carrying the flange is driven in rotation from a shaft carrying the disc of the first roller.

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19. (new): A unit as in claim 3, wherein the shaft carrying the flange is driven in rotation from a shaft carrying the disc of the first roller.

20. (new): A unit as in claim 9, wherein the shaft carrying the flange is driven in rotation from a shaft carrying the disc of the first roller.